

MONTGOMERY COUNTY RECREATION

PICKLEBALL LEAGUE RULES

The following rules are a quick overview of how the game is played. There are rule modifications made to meet the Montgomery County Recreation league. All other rules will be governed by the USA Pickleball Association. Montgomery County Recreation reserves the right to modify or change league rules or match play for the betterment of the leagues.

Rule revision: October 15, 2019

1. Eligibility

- A) All players must be 18 years of age and older to participate.
- B) If a player misses or cancels (forfeits) two nights, that player will not be placed on the schedule for the remainder of that season.

2. Double Leagues (Advance Beginner League – Doubles)

- A) This league is played as Doubles (two players per team: any gender) based on self-rated skill level of both players.
- B) Substitution: a player can be replaced with another player that is the same level. If a sub can not be replaced by the partner, other player(s) from the league may be used.
- E) The Montgomery County Recreation will provide game balls. Players are responsible for their own paddles.
- F) **Scoring and Game Time: 14 minutes or 15 points, whichever comes first. Ties are possible for league play only.**
- G) Players at the end of each match must record their score, using the Montgomery County Recreation score cards provided at the courts. Please email scores to Patrick.sullivan@montgomerycountymd.gov and players must turn in scorecards to the Gym Supervisor once their match is completed (see standings).

3. Ladder Leagues (rated as 2.0, 2.5, 3.0 & 3.5+)

- A) Five (5) players will be assigned to each court. Each player will play four games with four different players each night. This may be modified, depending on registration and the number of players.
- B) Substitution: will be allowed by using one of the idle players. The sub will not gain any points but will earn a maximum of seven points for the missing player. The Player that is participating with the sub, will gain maximum points. The Recreation staff will assist in the process.
- E) The Montgomery County Recreation will provide game balls. Players are responsible for their own paddles.
- F) **13 minutes or 15 points, whichever comes first. Ties are possible for league play only.**
- G) Players at the end of each match must record their score, using the Montgomery County Recreation score cards provided at the courts. Players must turn in scorecards to the Gym Supervisor once their games are completed. Each week, players will receive an email with update results, and new game schedule. Players may be moved up or down in level of play, depending on weekly results and scores.

2. Determining Serving Team

- A) Players use a coin toss to determine who will serve first. The winner of the coin toss will have the option to choose side or to serve or receive. Because there is not much time between games, please determine service before the clock starts.

Continued next page

3. The Serve

A) The serve must be made underhand.

1.) Section 4 of the IFP Rulebook, 4.A.1: Underhand Defined.

The arm must be moving in an upward arc and the paddle head shall be below the wrist when it strikes the ball (paddle head is that part of the paddle excluding handle. The highest point of the paddle head cannot be above any part of line formed where the wrist joint bends).

B) Paddle contact with the ball must be below the server's waist (navel level).

C) The serve is initiated with at least one foot behind the baseline; neither foot may contact the baseline or court until after the ball is struck.

D) The serve is made diagonally crosscourt and must land within the confines of the opposite diagonal court.

3. The Serve - continue

E) Only one serve attempt is allowed, except in the event of a let (the ball touches the net on the serve and lands on the proper service court; let serves are replayed).

4. Service Sequence

A) Both players on the serving doubles team have the opportunity to serve and score points until they commit a fault *(except for the first service sequence of each new game).

B) The first serve of each side-out is made from the right-hand court.

C) If a point is scored, the server switches sides and the server initiates the next serve from the left-hand court.

D) As subsequent points are scored, the server continues switching back and forth until a fault is committed and the first server loses the serve.

E) When the first server loses the serve the partner then serves from their correct side of the court (except for the first service sequence of the game*).

F) The second server continues serving until their team commits a fault and loses the serve to the opposing team.

G) Once the service goes to the opposition (at side out), the first serve is from the right-hand court and both players on that team have the opportunity to serve and score points until their team commits two faults.

H) In singles the server serves from the right-hand court when his or her score is even and from the left when the score is odd. *At the beginning of each new game only one partner on the serving team has the opportunity to serve before faulting, after which the service passes to the receiving team.

5. Scoring

- A) Points are scored only by the serving team.
- B) Games are normally played to 15 points or 14 minutes (advance Doubles) or 15 points or 13 minutes (Ladder league), which ever is reached first.
- C) When the serving team's score is even (0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10) the player who was the first server in the game for that team will be in the right-side court when serving or receiving; when odd (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) that player will be in the left-side court when serving or receiving.

6. Double-Bounce Rule

- A) When the ball is served, the receiving team must let it bounce before returning, and then the serving team must let it bounce before returning, thus two bounces.
- B) After the ball has bounced once in each team's court, both teams may either volley the ball (hit the ball before it bounces) or play it off a bounce (ground stroke).
- C) The double bounce rule eliminates the serve and volley advantage and extends rallies.

7. Non-Volley Zone

- A) The non-volley zone is the court area within 7 feet on both sides of the net.
- B) Volleying is prohibited within the non-volley zone. This rule prevents players from executing smashes from a position within the zone.
- C) It is a fault if, when volleying a ball, the player steps on the non-volley zone, including the line and/or when the player's momentum causes them or anything they are wearing or carrying to touch the non-volley zone including the associated lines.
- D) It is a fault if, after volleying, a player is carried by momentum into or touches the non-volley zone even if the volleyed ball is declared dead before this happens.
- E) A player may legally be in the non-volley zone any time other than when volleying a ball. F) The non-volley zone is commonly referred to as "the kitchen."

8. Line Calls

- A) A ball contacting any line, except the non-volley zone line on a serve, is considered "in."
- B) A ball contacting the playing surface outside of the baseline or sideline, even though the edge of the ball overlaps the line, is considered out of bounds.
- C) Players will call the lines on their side of the court. **Exception: Players from either team may call non-volley zone faults**
- D) No player should question an opponent's call unless asked. A player should ask the opponent's opinion if the opponent was in the better position to see the call. An opponent's opinion, if requested, shall be accepted. The opinion of a player looking down the line is more likely to be accurate than one looking across the line.
- E) A serve contacting the non-volley zone line is short and a fault.
- F) Players are responsible for all line calls.

9. Faults

- A) A fault is any action that stops play because of a rule violation.
- B) A fault by the receiving team results in a point for the serving team.
- C) A fault by the serving team results in the server's loss of serve or side out.
- D) A fault occurs when:
 - 1) A serve does not land within the confines of the receiving court
 - 2) The ball is hit into the net on the serve or any return
 - 3) The ball is volleyed before a bounce has occurred on each side
 - 4) The ball is hit out of bounds
 - 5) A ball is volleyed from the non-volley zone
 - 6) A ball bounces twice before being struck by the receiver
 - 7) A player, player's clothing, or any part of a player's paddle touches the net or the net post when the ball is in play
 - 8) There is a violation of a service rule
 - 9) A ball in play strikes a player or anything the player is wearing or carrying
 - 10) A ball in play strikes any permanent object before bouncing on the court

10. Standings – Ladder League

- A) Each week, each player's score will be calculated, which will determine what court, time and player partners will be scheduled for the next set of games.

11. Other Rules

- A) When net system have a horizontal bar that includes a center base. If the ball goes over the net and hits the center base or the horizontal bar, it is a let and will be replayed.

12. International Federation of Pickleball (IFP) – Official Tournament Rulebook

www.usapa.org/docs/ifp/USAPA-Rulebook.pdf